

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 14, and 23 as follows:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A holder for assisting in holding a paint container, comprising:
a cylindrical sleeve adapted to receive a thumb of a hand and having a longitudinal axis; and
a removable retainer having a wall with a first end connected to said sleeve, said first end being fixed relative to said sleeve, said wall having a second end extending generally perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of said sleeve to overlap a circumferential portion of said sleeve to receive a handle of a paint container therebetween, said second end being movable relative to said sleeve, said retainer being adapted to be removably attached to and detached from a the handle of a the paint container, whereby the retainer is attached to the handle and the sleeve receives the thumb of the hand to allow a weight of the paint container to be transferred to a remainder of the hand supporting at a bottom of the paint container.

2. (CANCELED)

3. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said sleeve is generally tubular in shape.

4. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said sleeve extends longitudinally to form a hollow interior.

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5. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 4 wherein said sleeve has at least one open end adapted to allow the thumb of the hand to extend into said hollow interior.

6. (CANCELED)

7. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said sleeve is made of a flexible material.

8. (CANCELED)

9. (CANCELED)

10. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said retainer has a general "U" shape.

11. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said retainer is made of a spring material.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first end and said second end form a hollow interior therebetween.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said second end is movable relative to said first end.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A holder for assisting in holding a paint container, comprising:

a cylindrical sleeve extending longitudinally to form a hollow interior with at least one open end adapted to receive a thumb of a hand, said sleeve being unitary circumferentially; and

a removable retainer extending from and being unitary and one-piece with said sleeve to receive a handle of a paint container therebetween, said retainer being adapted to be removably attached to and detached from a the handle of a the paint container, whereby the retainer is attached to the handle and the sleeve receives the thumb of the hand to allow a weight of the paint container to be transferred to a remainder of the hand supporting a bottom of the paint container.

15. (CANCELED)

16. (CANCELED)

17. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 14 wherein said sleeve is made of a flexible material.

18. (CANCELED)

19. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 14 wherein said retainer has a general "U" shape.

20. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 14 wherein said retainer is made of a spring material.

21. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 14 wherein said retainer has a first end and a second end to form a hollow interior.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A holder as set forth in claim 21 wherein said first end extends from said sleeve and said second end is movable relative to said first end.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A holder comprising:
a cylindrical sleeve having a wall extending longitudinally to form a hollow interior with at least one open end adapted to receive a thumb of a hand; and
a removable retainer extending from said wall of said sleeve to receive a handle of a paint container therebetween, said sleeve and retainer being made of a plastic material to form a monolithic structure that is unitary and one-piece, said retainer being adapted to be removably attached to and detached from a the handle of a the paint container, whereby the retainer is attached to the handle and the sleeve receives the thumb of the hand to allow a weight of the paint container to be transferred to a remainder of the hand supporting a bottom of the paint container.